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Message Text

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10
ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-12 IO-12 OMB-01 GAC-01 ACDA-19 MC-02 RSR-01 /146 W
---------- 076451
P R 160857 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1972
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY KAMPALA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 3117

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KE, SO, ET
SUBJ: KENYAN OFFICIAL EXPRESSES CONCERN RE SOMALIA MILITARY BUILDUP

BEGIN SUMMARY. KENYAN FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL EXPRESSED CONCERN TO CHARGE' MAY 15 RE " THREAT" TO KENYAN SECURITY

POSED BY RECENT SOMALI ARMS ACQUISITIONS AND AIRFIELD CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT KENYA INTENDS TO INCREASE ITS LEVEL OF ARMAMENT AS PARTIAL OFFSET, HE ASSERTED KENYA WOULD RELY PRIMARILY ON ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES AS DETERRENT TO MILITARY ACTION BY SOMALIA. HE CLAIMED SOMALIA NOW HAS STRONGEST AIR FORCE IN HORN AND WONDERED WHETHER HAILE SELASSIE MIGHT NOT BE SEEKING F-4 AIRCRAFT DURING HIS CURRENT U. S. VISIT. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING MAY 15 CALL BY CHARGE' AT FOREIGN MINISTRY ON
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OTHER BUSINESS, SENIOR DEPUTY SECRETARY BHOI VOLUNTEERED SOME OBSERVATIONS ON SOMALIA. HE EXPRESSED PARTICULAR RRONCERN OVER THREAT TO REGIONAL STABILITY POSED BY SOMALIA' S ACQUISITIONS OF SOVIET ARMS WHICH HE CLAIMED HAVE GIVEN SOMALIA " STRONGEST AIR FORCE" IN HORN. SITUATION EXACERBATED BY SUPPORT GIVEN TO SOMALIA BY LIBYA. HE ALSO NOTED THAT RECENT SOMALI MILITARY AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY NEAR KENYA (PRESUMABLY HE WAS REFERRING TO CHISIMAIO) INDICATED SOMALI ARMS ACQUISITIONS INTENDED FOR POSSIBLE USE AGAINST KENYA AS WELL AS ETHIOPIA.

2. BHOI PERSONALLY VERY PESSIMISTIC RE PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN KENYAN RELATIONS WITH SOMALIA. WHEN ASKED WHETHER KENYATTA- SIAD DIALOGUE MIGHT NOT REDUCE TENSIONS, HE REPLIED THAT CURRENT CHANNELS OF BILATERAL COMMUNICATION AT AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL ARE ADEQUATE. REAL OBSTACLE TO IMPROVEMENT IN RELATIONS WAS SOMALI REFUSAL TO ABANDON ADVOCACY OF ADJUSTMENTS IN KENYA BORDER. EVEN MINOR CONCESSIONS RE SOMALI INHABITED AREAS OF KENYA WOULD LIKELY ONLY STIMULATE FURTHER DEMANDS BY SOMALIA ACCORDING TO BHOI.

3. WHEN CHARGE' ASKED WHETHER KENYA WOULD RESPOND TO SOMALI MILITARY THREAT BY SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASING ITS OWN LEVEL OF ARMAMENT, BHOI SAID SOME MODERATE INCREASES BEING PLANNED PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF AIRCRAFT (PRESUMABLY HE WAS REFERRING TO HAWKER HUNTERS BEING OBTAINED FROM BRITISH). HOWEVER, HE STRESSED KENYA' S DETERMINATION NOT TO DIVERT SUBSTANTIAL RESOURCES AWAY FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INTO WASTEFUL REGIONAL ARMS RACE. KENYA, HE SAID, WOULD RELY HEAVILY ON ETHIOPIAN ARMED FORCES AS DETERRENT TO POSSIBLE SOMALI MILITARY ACTION AGAINST KENYA. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE POINTEDLY WONDERED WHETHER HAILE SELASSIE ON CURRENT U. S. VISIT WOULD SEEK F-4 AIRCRAFT TO REDRESS REGIONAL MILITARY BALANCE.
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